

# DRIEHAUS MUSEUM

## The Driehaus Museum presents new special exhibition *L’Affichomania: The Passion for French Posters*

**Celebrating the art of the Belle Époque poster with 45 works by five grand masters.**

**CHICAGO (January 2017)** - The Richard H. Driehaus Museum will present the special exhibition *L’Affichomania: The Passion for French Posters* from February 11, 2017 through January 7, 2018. The exhibition features 45 posters dating from 1875 to 1910 created by five grand masters: Jules Chéret, Eugène Grasset, Théophile-Alexandre Steinlen, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, and Alphonse Mucha.

Bright and bold and found everywhere in fin-de-siècle Paris, the poster was a brilliant fusion of art and commerce. “Subject as it was to wind, rain, and being covered up by posters from rival firms, the ephemeral poster nonetheless became the subject of passionate collecting in its own time,” says Jeannine Falino, exhibition curator. The poster craze, known as *affichomanie*, revolved around the acquisition of these posters, from buying and selling special editions to stealthy removals from walls and kiosks.

All the posters presented in the exhibition are drawn from the Collection of Richard H. Driehaus. “How fortunate we are to have these lively memories of the past to enjoy today; to experience that certain *je ne sais quoi* while strolling the exhibition galleries like the Parisians who once encountered them along the boulevards and in favorite bars, restaurants, and clubs; to savor forever the excitement of Paris during the glorious Belle Époque period through the colors and charm of these enchanting posters,” says Museum Founder and Collector, Richard H. Driehaus.

“The posters of fin-de-siècle Paris are a pillar of Mr. Driehaus’s collection, which began in the mid-1970s with his first acquisition, a small print by Jules Chéret,” says Lise Dubé-Scherr, Museum Director. “We look forward to sharing these beautiful, vibrant works with the public in the intimate galleries at the Driehaus Museum, bringing the flavor of Paris to Chicago.”

Each of the five masters of the medium will be featured in one of the period galleries located on the second and third floors of the Museum. This will allow guests to both explore the artist’s individual style and to compare them with their contemporaries.

### About the Artists

**Jules Chéret** fathered the poster craze when he harnessed the techniques of chromolithography, formerly a commercial medium used for reproductions, and brought them into the realm of fine art. Chéret’s bold imagery and colorful style inspired a generation of artists, led by the four featured in this exhibition. **Théophile-Alexandre Steinlen** created a proliferation of images for an astounding variety of magazines, journals, and printed media, reaching a wide cross-section of Parisian society. **Eugène Grasset**, influenced by the Arts and Crafts movement, gave his posters the luminosity and definition of stained-glass windows. **Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec** immortalized in his art the performers and prostitutes he met in his bohemian Montmartre milieu. **Alphonse Mucha** defined the Art Nouveau graphic look, adorning Parisian stage stars with golden haloes and sinuous, windswept tresses.

### Exhibition Presenting Sponsor

The Driehaus Museum is also delighted to announce Northern Trust as the presenting sponsor of *L’Affichomania: The Passion for French Posters*. “Northern Trust is pleased, once again, to partner with The Richard H. Driehaus Museum in sponsoring *L’Affichomania: The Passion for French Posters*,” says Northern Trust President–Wealth Management, Central Region, Mac MacLellan. “Northern Trust has a deep history of supporting the renowned cultural institutions of Chicago and The Richard H. Driehaus Museum is no exception. Our commitment to support the arts and to bring interesting and noteworthy exhibits to our community is furthered through our ongoing relationship with the Driehaus Museum.”

### Exhibition Publication

*L’Affichomania: The Passion for French Posters* is accompanied by a richly illustrated catalogue with a preface by Richard H. Driehaus, Museum Founder and Collector, and essay by Jeannine Falino, exhibition curator. The book is published and distributed by The University of Chicago Press. It will be available in the Museum Store beginning February 1, 2017.

### General Information

*L’Affichomania* will be on view at the Richard H. Driehaus Museum (40 East Erie Street, Chicago, Illinois) from February 11, 2017 to January 7, 2018.

General admission to the Driehaus Museum includes admission to the exhibition. Guests may choose to explore the exhibition on their own, or join a guided tour comprising highlights of the Driehaus Museum’s history and permanent collection as well as exhibition highlights. An Acoustiguide audio tour of the exhibition, featuring commentary by Jeannine Falino, exhibition curator, and Richard H. Driehaus, Museum Founder and Collector, is also available.

Admission for members of the Driehaus Museum is free. For additional information about joining the Museum, which includes exclusive access to the *L’Affichomania* galleries prior to the public opening, please visit the Museum’s [Membership page](#).

Public programs exploring a variety of themes from the exhibition, including musical performances, exhibition talks, and more, will be presented for the duration of the exhibition. For information and tickets, please visit our [Programs page](#).

Host a private event at the Driehaus Museum and enjoy exclusive access to the special exhibition *L’Affichomania*. Whether planning a private affair, a corporate gathering, or a celebratory occasion, the Museum provides an elegant and dramatic backdrop. Entertaining at the Driehaus Museum is a privilege we extend exclusively to our Premier Level Donors and Corporate Members.

For additional information, including Museum hours, group tour information, directions, and parking, please visit [DriehausMuseum.org](http://DriehausMuseum.org) or call 312.482.8933. ext. 21.

## Connect

The exhibition is featured on the [Driehaus Museum's website](#), as well as on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#). Use the hashtag #driehauspostermania to share your experiences.

For all media inquiries regarding *L'Affochomania: The Passion for French Posters*, please contact:

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High-resolution images for the media can be found on the [Press section](#) of the Driehaus Museum website.

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# L’AFFICHOMANIA

THE PASSION FOR FRENCH POSTERS

February 11, 2017 – January 7, 2018

## Introduction



*L’Affichomania: The Passion for French Posters* features approximately 50 posters by the five grand masters of the medium: Jules Chéret, Eugène Grasset, Théophile-Alexandre Steinlen, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, and Alphonse Mucha. The posters date from 1875 to 1910, the exuberant era in France known as the Belle Époque. These pioneering artists reigned in Paris during this period of artistic proliferation, defining a never-before-seen, and never forgotten, art form.

Bright and bold and found everywhere along the boulevards of fin-de-siècle Paris, the color poster was a brilliant fusion of art and commerce. It advertised cigarette papers and milk, immortalized stage stars and bohemian cabarets, and won the adoration of passersby and art collectors. Subject as it was to wind, rain, and being covered up by posters from rival firms, the ephemeral poster nonetheless became the subject of passionate collecting in its own time. The poster craze, known as *affichomanie*, revolved around the acquisition of these posters, from buying and selling special editions to stealthy removals from walls and kiosks.

Drawn from the Driehaus Collection of Fine and Decorative Arts, the posters on view feature such iconic images as Steinlen’s *Le Chat Noir* and Lautrec’s *Moulin Rouge: La Goulue*. Each of the five artists will be featured in one of the period galleries in the Museum, allowing guests to explore their individual styles and compare them with their contemporaries.

Left: An example of poster by Alphonse Mucha for a famous stage actress of the time – Sarah Bernhardt. This piece promotes her role in *La Samaritaine* at the Théâtre de la Renaissance.

Alphonse Mucha, *Sarah Bernhardt in "La Samaritaine"*, 1897  
Photographed by John Faier

Presenting Sponsor:



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## The Five Grand Masters

### Jules Chéret (French, 1836–1932)

Jules Chéret is widely recognized as the father of the artistic poster. He was the first to see the formerly commercial medium's potential for creating original art.

Chéret created lithe, elegant figures for his advertisements known as cherettes, recalling the work of Rococo painters Jean-Antoine Watteau and Jean-Honoré Fragonard. He pioneered a bold, graphic style that led to a revolution among a new generation of artists, who grasped the power of color and created their own memorable images.

### Eugène Grasset (Swiss, 1841–1917)

Eugène Grasset designed posters in a medieval style popularized by the Arts and Crafts movement in Britain. He favored jewel-toned colors, intense patterns, and black outlines that emulated stained glass.

Grasset's talents extended beyond posters to encompass all of the decorative arts. He worked in a range of media, designing medieval-style furniture for the Chat Noir cabaret in Montmartre and imaginative compositions for wallpaper, tapestries, stained glass, ceramics, jewelry, and even postage stamps.

### Théophile-Alexandre Steinlen (French, born Switzerland, 1859–1923)

Théophile-Alexandre Steinlen was among the most prolific printmakers of the Belle Époque, reaching a wide cross-section of Parisian society through his work in posters, journals, and a host of other printed formats. In his 40-year career Steinlen produced an astounding 4,300 images, of which only 37 were posters.

His memorable design for Le Chat Noir, the Montmartre cabaret Steinlen frequented along with members of the Parisian avant-garde, is among the most iconic posters of the era.

### Alphonse Mucha (Czech, 1860–1939)

Alphonse Mucha became a great success after actress Sarah Bernhardt, reigning queen of the Paris stage in the late nineteenth century, chose him as her favored designer.

More than any other poster designer of the period, Mucha's work was iconic of the Art Nouveau style, with characteristic sinuous lines and subtle colors. Born in Moravia, now the Czech Republic, Mucha spent the last decades of his life exploring Slavic subjects in his art.

### Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec (French, 1864–1901)

Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec was a central figure in bohemian Montmartre's nightlife scene. Lautrec's ability to capture a believable likeness, often in the form of caricature, made him an ideal artist to depict French performers dependent upon recognition for box-office success. His sympathetic, even tender, depictions of marginalized performers and prostitutes, and his willful disregard for traditional rules of representation, resulted in some of the most memorable images of the period.

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### Exhibition Fact Sheet

Exhibition Title:	<i>L’Affichomania: The Passion for French Posters</i>
Dates:	February 11, 2017 – January 7, 2018
Location:	The Richard H. Driehaus Museum 40 East Erie, Chicago, IL 60611
Hours:	Tuesday through Sunday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Closed Mondays
Sponsors:	Presenting Sponsor: Northern Trust Sustaining Sponsors: Antunovich Associates and William and Irene Beck Supporting Sponsor: Sophisticated Living
Publication:	The lavishly illustrated companion publication to the exhibition <i>L’Affichomania: The Passion for French Posters</i> presents the work of five grand masters of the French poster, drawn from the Collection of Richard H. Driehaus.
Website:	Information about <i>L’Affichomania: The Passion for French Posters</i> including a gallery of selected images, can be accessed at <a href="http://DriehausMuseum.org">DriehausMuseum.org</a>
Admission:	Admission to the exhibition is included in the price of general admission and free for Museum members.  General self-guided admission is \$20 for adults, \$12.50 for seniors (65+), \$10 for students with a valid I.D. and youth (6-12 years); children ages five years and younger are free.
Guided Tours & Hours:	Special one-hour guided tours which combine the Museum’s history and collections with highlights of the exhibition can be purchased for an additional \$5. Tours are offered daily at 10:30 a.m., 11:30 a.m., 1:30 p.m., and 3:30 p.m. An Acoustiguide audio tour of the Museum and exhibition will also be available for \$5 in addition to general admission. For additional information, please visit <a href="http://DriehausMuseum.org">DriehausMuseum.org</a> or call 312-482-8933, ext.21. For group tours of at least 10 guests, please dial ext. 41 or email <a href="mailto:groups@driehausmuseum.org">groups@driehausmuseum.org</a> .
Public Programs:	Public programs exploring a variety of themes from the exhibition, including musical performances, exhibition talks, and more, will be presented for the duration of the exhibition. For information and tickets, please visit <a href="http://DriehausMuseum.org/Programs">DriehausMuseum.org/Programs</a> in January 2017.
Facility Rentals:	Host a private event at the Driehaus Museum and enjoy exclusive access to the special exhibition <i>L’Affichomania</i> . Whether planning a private affair, a corporate gathering, or a celebratory occasion, the Museum provides an elegant and dramatic backdrop. Entertaining at the Driehaus Museum is a privilege we extend exclusively to our Premier Level Donors and Corporate Members.
Museum Store:	The Museum Store will offer a selection of <i>L’Affichomania</i> merchandise in addition to other gifts, jewelry and home items inspired by the Museum’s historic interiors and collections.

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## Richard H. Driehaus – Museum Founder & Collector



The first art acquisitions in the early 1970s by Chicago businessman, philanthropist, and collector Richard H. Driehaus were two works by Jules Chéret, father of the artistic poster. During this period when the Driehaus Collection of Fine and Decorative Arts was formed, acquisitions focused primarily on posters of Belle Époque Paris by Chéret and his contemporaries, including Alphonse Mucha, Théophile-Alexandre Steinlen, Henri Meunier, Jacques Villon, and others. Early acquisitions also included acclaimed American poster artists of the same era, including William H. Bradley and Louis John Rhead.

From that essential core, the collection has grown to include posters by such luminaries as Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec and Eugène Grasset, as well as master works of design by Louis Majorelle, Édouard Colonna, Emile Galle, René Lalique, Josef Hoffman, Herter Brothers, and John LaFarge. In addition to these important holdings, the Driehaus Collection is one of the country’s leading private collections of works by preeminent American decorative designer Louis Comfort Tiffany.

In 2003, Mr. Driehaus founded the Driehaus Museum to publicly exhibit and preserve his collection. Today the Museum is a showcase for the late 19th and early 20th-century art and design of Europe and the United States, displayed against the magnificent backdrop of the meticulously restored Nickerson Mansion in Chicago.

## Jeannine Falino – Exhibition Curator



Jeannine Falino is an independent curator and museum consultant specializing in American decorative arts, craft and design from the colonial era to the present, with expertise in metalwork, jewelry and ceramics.

Previously the Carolyn and Peter Lynch Curator of American Decorative Arts at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Falino is currently an adjunct curator at the Museum of Arts and Design in New York and consulting curator of American silver at the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art. She teaches the history of American ceramics at the Rhode Island School of Design.

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## Publication

Title:	<i>L’Affichomania: The Passion for French Posters</i>
Produced by:	The Monacelli Press, New York, New York
Distributed by:	The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, Illinois
Release Date:	February 1, 2017
Length:	The book will be composed of approximately 120 pages with more than 45 full-color plates.
Foreword:	Lise Dubé-Scherr, Executive Director
Preface:	“In Pursuit of Grand Masters”, Richard H. Driehaus, Museum Founder and Collector
Principle Essay:	“‘The Distinctive Art of Our Time’: The Belle Époque Poster”, Jeannine Falino, Exhibition Curator
Photographer:	John A. Faier, Chicago, IL